

comfort. M. Lacroix, for some months, made the stipulated advances without raising any difficulty, but when 1870 arrived the position "became more and more uncertain. Zola was reduced to such a state of anxiety that for weeks at a time he could hardly write, and it was only the encouragement he received from his brave young wife that gave him enough energy to persevere.

Thanks to newspaper work, he earned just sufficient money to live on meagrely from day to day and keep the home together; and at last, the publication of "La Fortune des Eougon" being still deferred, he turned from that work, which he had not quite completed, in order to begin another. This was "La Cure'e," into which some of his critics have read a great many things which he never put in it. Politically and financially, it was simply the story of the Hauss-mardsation of Paris, while morally its central intrigue was neither more nor less than an adaptation of the ancient legend of Phaedra to the corrupt times of the Empire. Of this second book Zola had just written the first chapter, at the end of May, 1870, when "Le Siecle" suddenly decided to publish his earlier work. So once again the young author reverted to "La Fortune des Eougon," correcting the proofs of the commencement and penning the

conclusion.

Tilings looked brighter now, but after that year of keen anxiety Madame Zola was in a very ailing state and needed change and rest. Zola himself felt a longing to get away from Paris for a time, and so, after making various pecuniary arrangements with M. Lacroix and "Le Siescle," he started with his wife and mother for Provence. Then, all at once, came the thunderclap: Napoleon III declared war against Prussia, France was invaded ; her armies were sur-